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# Learning centers can assist the slow learner in a self-contained classroom

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LEARNING CENTERS CAN ASSIST THE SLOW LEARNER  
IN A SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOM

by

Faye Ellen Thom

A RESEARCH PAPER  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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This research paper has been  
approved for the Graduate Committee  
of the Cardinal Stritch College by

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(Advisor)

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Purpose

Success for the slow learner in a self-contained classroom is essential. The purpose of this research paper was to review the literature on the needs of slow learners, their need for individualization of instruction and the relationship of these to learning centers. It was the author's intention to illustrate that learning centers can serve as an aid to individualize instruction for slow learners in a self-contained classroom.

#### Statement of Problem

The slow learner can be more of a "frustration than a challenge" (Heinrich, 1968, p. 9) to the teacher in the self-contained classroom. Few teachers really know what to do with the slow learner, except to avoid classes full of slow learners. Slow learners are perceived as tending to hold back the entire class or they get lost in the educational process. All too often the slow learner begins falling behind in first grade and seldom really catches up (Heinrich, 1968).

Due to the slow learner's need for frequency, intensity and variety of repetition in the presentation of materials to achieve learning, the slow learner will function more effectively when presented with appropriate success-orientated tasks (Dinkmeyer & Dreikurs, 1963). However, each child learns in his own way and in his own time (National School Public Relations Association, 1971).

Bloom theorizes that slow learners can learn as much as fast learners, but they require more time and different instructional strategies (Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971) given that they have appropriate readiness skills. Teachers often do not have this extra time to give. Learning centers can serve as this aid to individualize for the slow learning child in a self-contained classroom. Success orientated tasks are essential to foster encouragement and success in the slow learner (Dinkmeyer, 1963).

#### Scope and Limitations

The author concentrated the assistance given the kindergarten and primary slow learning children through learning centers in the self-contained classroom in this research paper.

#### Definitions of Terms

Before reviewing the literature, the author found it necessary to clarify certain terms. For the purpose of this research paper, the following definitions are used:

Assist: To lend aid or help. "To give support to" (Webster, 1960, p. 54) the slow learner.

Individualization of Instruction: The type of instruction in which the student engages in tasks appropriate to the student's own learning style and needs (Bishop, 1971).

Learning Centers: Areas within the self-contained classroom which help children develop independent learning skills (Nations, 1976).

. . . the learning center consists of any one area within the classroom itself, established temporarily or permanently in the form of individual or group activities, to which pupils may be directed by the teacher or may be given the opportunities to select . . . . The learning center may constitute an individual desk, a cluster of desks, an area on the floor, a bulletin board or chalkboard, a table, a file cabinet, or a bookshelf. It may be teacher-constructed, pupil constructed, or the result of a teacher-pupil effort. (Thomas, 1975, p. xiii)

Self-contained Classroom: The classroom where the elementary school child spends most of his time. Most of the materials needed to carry on the child's education during the course of the day are contained within the classroom (Cooley & Leinhardt, 1975).

Slow Learner: Children who repeatedly score between 75 and 90 on a verbal intelligence test. "Although capable of achieving academic learning, they do so at a slower rate" (Heinrich, 1968, p. 4). Repetition, intensity of the repetition that enhances the individual's learning style and variety are required to learn with success. Other terms used interchangeably with slow learner in the literature reviewed are underachiever, slow average, low achiever, undermotivated and culturally deprived (Dunn & Dunn, 1975; Roucek, 1969).

#### Summary

The needs of the slow learner in a self-contained classroom were discussed in this chapter. Emphasis was placed on the need to develop learning centers. Thus, learning centers serving as an aid to individualize instruction for the slow learner and to accomplish success in the self-contained classroom. Chapter I also presented a definition of the following pertinent terms for the purpose of clarification: assist; individualization of instruction; learning centers; self-contained classroom; and, slow learner.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The intent of this chapter is to review a portion of the literature dealing with who the slow learner is; the needs of the slow learner in a self-contained classroom; and the slow learner's need for individualization to accomplish and achieve with success in a self-contained classroom. The author's hypothesis is that learning centers can meet the needs of the slow learner with success in a self-contained classroom.

"We are all slow in some ways and we all have talent in other ways" (Silberman, 1979, p. 38). Therefore, within the changing educational climate (Olivera, 1971) we must consider differences, for this is vital and essential in determining children's needs (Ollila, 1977). Webb and Howard (1977) have observed that many attempts are being made to improve the types of programs and assistance available to slow learning students in our schools.

However, Heinrich (1968) indicates that

The one biggest problem in American education is how to educate every child, whatever his ability, background, interests, handicaps, gifts. Some say schools cannot possibly educate everybody and should not even try

because, in trying, they fail to educate anybody. For most Americans, however, the opportunity for each person to grow mentally to his fullest capacity is a basic part of our democratic society, and this opportunity for everybody must be provided by the public schools.

(p. 1)

Forte and Mackenzie (1972) found that:

Meeting individual needs has become a well-known cliché in the present day educators' vocabulary, but it is seldom a comfortable one. The idea of meeting the learner's needs on a one-to-one basis is compelling, if not a mandatory educational assumption, but there looms overhead that inevitable ominous cloud of doubt that in practical reality we can exercise that which we so firmly believe.

The task of personalizing instruction assumes a whole new dimension as soon as it moves from the college textbook to the live classroom. There the spectrum of needs and abilities to be dealt with is as wide as the number of children, and the dilemma is magnified by the real limitations of time, space, staff, resources, and energy. (p. 3)

Let us take a look at Paul. Heinrich (1968) and the author both feel that each classroom has numerous learners such as Paul. Educators must meet the slow learner's needs within the self-contained classroom.

## Prologue: Biography of a School Boy

He might have been a girl, but he happened to be a boy, named Paul. He was born on July 4, rejoiced over by his parents (his father, a factory superintendent; his mother, a former teacher), nurtured tenderly through toddling and preschool years. He looked and acted pretty much like every other child his age (although his parents, rightly, saw him as very different and very special).

He entered the public school kindergarten at age five and went into first grade just two months after his sixth birthday. First grade is learning-to-read time, say the educators, so Paul was taught along with the other thirty-two first graders. At the end of the year, he couldn't read. He repeated first grade and by the end of this second year, he read primers quite well. Somehow he didn't seem very proud of his ability since he was well aware that he was one of the dumber kids.

It was in second grade that he began telling his mother he hated school. "Why do I have to go? Why can't I stay home and play?"

His mother worried a bit but said, "He'll grow out of it. Boys are always a bit slower." His father said, "He's all boy."

In third grade, he became troublesome in class. His mother said, "Why does the teacher pick on him all the



time." His father said, "Why doesn't that kid settle down and work? We never had this trouble with his brother and sister."

He failed third grade. His mother said, "Einstein didn't do so well in school." His teacher said (to herself), "What's wrong with my teaching? What's wrong with that boy? Why couldn't I bring him up to average?"

His parents began avoiding school and teachers. They had heard all of the things that were wrong with Paul many times, and nobody seemed to know what to do about him.

By seventh grade, he was four years retarded in reading and did poorly in every subject, including manual training. He disliked everything about school, fought with the other boys, complained that all his teachers had it in for him.

He was promoted, not graduated, to high school and showed some enthusiasm for football. He was dropped from the freshman team at midterm because of failing grades. (He had lost interest anyway.) He dropped totally out of school in his sophomore year.

He is now looking for a job. He says maybe he will join the Navy. Some day he thinks he would like to be a big executive, or maybe a football coach.

His mother and father hope he will come to his senses and finish high school so he can go to college.

His teachers are glad he is out of school so they can concentrate on those students who really want an education.

At age seventeen, Paul is a miserable failure.(pp. 2-3)

Just as Paul indicated early in his education, that his needs were not being met, so do all of our learners.

Our children let us know when we are not meeting their needs. They act out, become bored and restless, and find something other than learning to occupy their time in school. Instead of working with us they work against us, making our work many times more difficult and far less rewarding.

We must meet the children's needs, capture and fire their imagination, and make learning inviting and fun. (Mummert, 1974, p. 5)

No matter what level the slow learner is on, success and achievement are possible in the self-contained classroom through learning centers. An old Chinese proverb sums this up quite well as Ishler (1974) indicates: "I hear, and I forget; I see, and I remember; I do, and I understand" (p. 3).

To use John Dewey's phrase found in Ishler (1974) "the child learns through doing--his doing and not someone else's" (p. 3).

The slow learner can achieve with success in a self-contained classroom with learning centers. The learning centers can assist the slow learner to achieve as Ollila

(1977) paraphrasing Walt Whitman's poem, "There Was A Child." He

reminds us that the environment into which a child goes forth has an impact on his life. ' . . . for the day or the certain part of the day. Or for many years or stretching cycles of year.' Of all the environments children encounter, school is the one intended to enable them to reach their fullest potential, indeed, to provide positive stretching cycles of years. (p. 21)

It is the author's contention that educators can provide for, and thus, enable slow learners to reach their fullest potential by using learning centers, as previously defined in the self-contained classroom.

#### The Slow Learner

All children are unique, unique unto themselves (Collier, 1967). So is the slow learner in the self-contained classroom. However, Heinrich indicates that

nobody really knows exactly who they are, and yet almost any teacher can pick them out for you . . . . Nobody knows exactly how many there are, but everybody agrees that there are millions (your children and their children, not my children, of course). The most common estimate is that twenty out of every one hundred pupils chosen at random are slow learners, making a total of at least four million in the United States. (Heinrich, 1968, p. 4)

Heinrich (1968) further found that when educators are asked about slow learners in a self-contained classroom, they agree that slow learners are:

1. NOT mentally retarded, although they do merge into the so-called educable mentally handicapped with I.Q.s ranging from 50 to 75.
2. NOT necessarily underachievers, since "everybody is an underachiever since who among us ever reaches his maximum mental development?" The underachiever is usually referred to as a student "who has measured ability to achieve at a level significantly above that which he actually attains. The gifted student is often the greatest underachiever. Any student--slow, average, fast--may be an underachiever."
3. NOT extremely different from the average. Not look, act, think extremely different from average. They go through same mental processes as average or fast learner, but it appears they have a different rate of perception. Need longer time to understand. No clearcut line between average and slow, average and bright, mentally retarded and slow.
4. NOT all "culturally deprived." A very large number do come from low economic and ghetto environments, but slow learners are found in all schools in all neighborhoods.

5. NOT all "handminded"--that is: good at manual arts and crafts and shopwork.
6. NOT all potential delinquents--some will be NOT all marked to be school dropouts.
7. NOT all permanently slow learners. May be very close to average. A good teacher may bring him into range of the average. The child may be labeled wrongly as slow learner because of perceptual or cultural or emotional problems. May be just "late bloomer."
8. NOT all inferior learners. It may take a long time to understand a concept, but understanding is as good as a child who catches on fast. One should use great care in making statements about inferior learning and learners.
9. NOT big, beautiful and dumb. It is likely slightly below average in size, build, and motor ability. They come in all sizes and shapes.
10. NOT called slow learners after they get out of school--may be ill prepared for successful living by school experience. Many more join ranks of acceptable and respectable citizenry: work, vote, pay taxes and support issues for public schools, even reprimand their children for not doing better work in school. (Children may not be slow learners.) (pp 5-6)

However, Heinrich (1968) did find that educators gladly tell you that slow learners in a self-contained classrooms are:

1. Below average in reading ability--usually one or two years behind grade level. Some--oral reading--fairly well--but understanding meaning of what they read--very slow.
2. Behind in most subjects, some do well in a few subjects.
3. Take a long time to understand things--get instructions mixed up. Slow to see relationships between ideas. Easily confused and distracted--accept generalizations too easily.
4. Some are troublemakers. Many are quiet in class and reluctant to speak up. When responding--they mumble in low voices.
5. Some are not happy in school. Many have problems with classmates as well as studies. They are seldom leaders in their own group, although they may lead with children younger than they are. (p. 5)

Van Sickle (1978) expressed concern that slow learners are often characterized by negative self-concepts, "negative attitudes toward learning, few clarified values, inadequate study skills, inadequate inquiry skills, and little subject matter information. . . . Slow learners find it more difficult to make relatively unfamiliar ideas and phenomena" (p. 64) meaningful.

The personality and adjustment of the slow learner may be the same as that of the bright pupil (Featherstone, 1951), however, "the educational problems of the slow learner are acute where equality of educational opportunity has been equated with identical educational experiences for all children" (Johnson, 1963, p. 56).

The slow learner's primary problem during childhood is an educational one. It is not sufficient to merely adapt the instructional level to their learning level. With slower development, lower level of learning ability, lower final potential intellectual level, and restricted psycho-social stimulation in the majority of the cases, they require a unique curriculum that takes these factors into consideration.

Evidence strongly indicates that where problems have been instituted, designed specifically to meet the needs of slow learners, most antisocial deviate behavior is either materially reduced in intensity or vanishes altogether. (Johnson, 1963, pp. 56-57)

Learning centers can meet the needs of the slow learner in the self-contained classroom if the extra effort is taken, and is put into the self-contained classroom. Slow learners can achieve academic learning; however, "they do so at a slower rate" (Heinrich, 1968, p. 4).

In Ecclesiasticus, the slow learner is referred to as the one that "will maintain the state of the world. . . ." (Heinrich, 1968, p. 1). It is vital that we meet the needs of this person who will proceed and maintain our world.

In 1976, Swiss and Olsen's research estimates that fifteen to eighteen percent of the general school population may be considered slow learners. Although this percentage is not consistent for every school and every classroom, most classroom teachers will eventually find some of these children in their classes. And reading specialists will undoubtedly encounter a higher percentage in their specialized classes. (p. 732)

Witty (1966) estimates approximately eighteen percent to twenty percent of the school enrollment are slow learners.

Heidmann (1973) estimates that fifteen percent to twenty percent of the children in any heterogeneous class have difficulty learning the basic school subjects.

Children of this sizable minority are slow learners because they have not yet acquired some of the very basic skills which our curricula assume. If they cannot look at one spot for longer than a fraction of a second, they cannot "see" to learn; if they cannot perceive the difference between an a and an e or the difference between pin and pen, they cannot learn to read; if they have difficulty holding and moving a pencil, they cannot learn to write; if they have a balance and



posture problem and cannot maintain a specific position, learning the material presented can only be of secondary importance. All of us have seen such children in our classroom and have often been frustrated by their "inexplicable" failures. (Heidmann, 1973, p. 1)

We can attempt to meet these needs with the aids of learning centers in the self-contained classroom. Frustration will be reduced and the slow learner will feel success.

The slow learner may appear to be an impulsive decision-maker, may seem to be easily led. Very often, he will not seek additional information either because he is unaware of the existence of the information or is afraid of overtaxing an already strained informational-retrieval system. Intellectual curiosity is often lacking, thus he shows little interest in exploring any but the most necessary avenues of intellectual contact. The slow learner may often fail to seek new ideas or new procedures for that new challenge is ALWAYS simply another invitation to failure (Younie, 1967). A new challenge need not be an invitation to failure if the slow learner can achieve with success, even if it is at a slower rate (Witty, 1966). Success is vital to the confidence and essential to the security of the slow learner (Ingram, 1953). Interest centers may be the key means by which the slow learner can feel success, not failure, in a self-contained classroom. Learning centers

will assist in the development of confidence and security by enabling the slow learner to attain success.

In 1970, Karnes identified the following characteristics of slow learners:

- Slow learners show weakness in retention; both immediate and delayed. They need more repetition to reinforce learning.

Overlearning is important. It is crucial that these children have opportunities to practice skills and use knowledge in various meaningful contexts to ensure permanency of learning.

- The slow learner's reasoning ability is poorer than that of the normal child. He is slow to see cause and effect relationships, to make inferences, to draw logical and valid conclusions, to transfer learning, and to generalize.

Slow learners need meaningful educational experiences geared to their stage of development and ample opportunity to develop reasoning skills. They also need much teacher guidance in order to see meaningful associations. A multisensory approach seems to be particularly appropriate in making learning experiences more concrete. The quality of learning experiences is far more important to the slow learner than the quantity of experiences.

- Short attention span seems to typify this group of children. However, the short attention span is often due to poor instruction rather than to a defect

in the slow learner. When materials are interesting and when success is possible, the attention span of the slow learner tends to be adequate.

- Slow learners are not as curious and creative as their more able peers. Since achievement and creative thinking have a high correlation, slow learners should be encouraged to develop their creative abilities, especially in language and thinking. They should be encouraged to ask questions and to think through various ways of solving problems. In addition, self-expression through art and music activities can provide outlets that are satisfying and rewarding to them.
- They have a hard time following directions. This problem presents considerable difficulty in school. Since their memory spans are comparatively short, the teacher should make sure that the directions he gives are specific and definite. He should consider carefully how many directions to give at any one time and keep them within each child's ability to follow them successfully.
- Unlike brighter children, slow learners do not learn incidentally as a rule. If they are not specifically taught, they are unlikely to learn by themselves. Those learnings felt to be important to current and future academic success and adjustment

must never be left to chance but must be taught systematically and sequentially. Careful planning by the teacher is a must to facilitate learning among slow learners.

- Slow learners respond to immediate goals rather than to delayed ones. These children must see a reason here and now for engaging in a task. A reward or gratification that is postponed for a week or a month is meaningless. For example, learning arithmetic makes sense to slow learners who need to know arithmetic facts to hold their jobs in certain work-study programs. When they see no immediate, tangible need for learning the facts, they are not likely to apply themselves.
- Poor work habits and poor motivation to learn characterize slow learners, who find it difficult to persist independently until a task is completed. Activities should be carefully chosen so that success is possible and so that a minimum amount of time is required for the completion of a task. Recognition for completion of tasks is important to encourage future efforts. The complexities of the task and the amount of time necessary for completion can be increased as the slow learner matures and progresses.

- The slow learner has poorly developed language and communication skills. He needs many opportunities to practice language. He learns by talking about meaningful, firsthand experiences involving what he has seen, what he has heard, what he has done, and what he plans to do.

He needs a stimulating school environment where he has many things to talk about. In this way, he increases his vocabulary and improves in his ability to communicate ideas to others. The greater his facility in the use of words, the more effective his thinking will become.

- Slow learners are capable of being followers but have limited leadership potentials. Schools must aim to help slow learners make valid decisions as to whom they wish to follow. Learning to be good followers is important to them, especially in achieving personal objectives and democratic goals.
- Slow learners feel less confident and less adequate than average children. To build up feelings of adequacy and personal worth, it is essential to give them immediate feedback as to the correctness of their responses. They need more praise and encouragement than their brighter peers. Tangible evidence

of progress should be made available in such forms as graphs, positive notes to pupil and parents, positive verbal evaluations by teachers and other pupils, positive comparisons of present work with previous.

(pp. 42-44)

Learning centers can assist the slow learner in the self-contained classroom in each area with success.

For educators, recognition of problems and characteristics are essential. No longer can they attempt to sweep the difficulties of the slow learners in the self-contained classroom out of sight (Stevenson, 1974).

All children, including the slow learner, must feel worthwhile. Edith Neisser (Dinkmeyer, 1963) encourages six attitudes through which a feeling of security can be given to all children including the slow learning.

1. You are the kind who can do it.
2. It's all right to try. Failure is no crime.
3. Provide plenty of opportunities for successful achievement. Don't set standards so high children are constantly falling short.
4. Be pleased with a reasonably good attempt. Show confidence in their ability to become competent.
5. Accept children as they are. Like him as he is so he can like himself.
6. Guarantee certain rights and privileges.

(Dinkmeyer, 1963, pp. 46-47)

These are some of the very attitudes which can facilitate successful learning for the slow learner in the self-contained classroom. Learning centers can accomplish this. Let the child know that you have faith in him "as he is" (Dinkmeyer, 1963, p. 48) not as he could be. This provides each child with a feeling of success (Dinkmeyer, 1963). Experiences in which the slow learner can have success and a feeling of accomplishment and achievement are essential (Johnson, 1963).

### The Needs of the Slow Learner

The needs of the slow learner in a self-contained classroom are often neglected in an attempt to provide for the average and superior students. However, it is vital that the needs of the slow learner, and the importance of the slow learner be appreciated as of a potential future citizen. Unless educators meet these needs and give adequate preparation to slow learners, they will not become self-sustaining individuals. If their needs are met, slow learners will work successfully and carry on their share of responsibilities (Witty, 1966).

Heidmann (1973) indicates that the slow learner can be taught in a self-contained classroom. However, the learning styles and pace at which a slow learning child

learns are the factors that differentiate him from other students (Marshall, 1977; Dunn, 1979). A great deal of harm can be done by forcing the slow learner "into a mold that does not fit" (Reckinger, 1979).

Three recent research-based assumptions, essential in meeting the daily needs of slow learning students, cite further that:

1. Every student has the potential for learning the next thing beyond that which he/she already knows; therefore, that "next thing" is the area in which learning effort should be focused. Because students learn at different rates, the "same for everyone" is too difficult for some and too easy for others.
2. Students use different modes and strategies in learning. Some students learn best by doing, others by observing; some by listening, others by talking, reading, or seeing the "real thing"; some in small groups, others in large groups; some with their left brain centers, others with their right brain centers; some are stimulated by friends, others distracted; and so on.
3. Students need different kinds of assistance from and stimulation by the teacher. Some students



learn best with high levels of concern, others with low; some need prodding, others need support; some need a great deal of praise, others need little; some need few practice opportunities; others a great many; and so on. (Hunter, 1977, p. 352)

Interest centers in the self-contained classroom can meet these needs of the slow learner. Dunn (1979) cited Farr's studies that both verify and support that slow learners do better when "taught and tested in ways that respond to individual preferences" (p. 431). Furthermore:

Slow learners tend to be tactual and kinesthetic rather than being able to learn by listening or reading. They should be taught through self-correcting task cards, learning circles, electroboards, body games, and instructional packages. If peer-oriented, they should be exposed to small-group techniques such as "circles of knowledge," team learning, brainstorming, case studies, simulations, role-playing or group analysis. If they prefer informality and "cannot sit" for long periods, they should be permitted structured mobility through the use of learning stations, interest centers, "magic carpet" areas, a media center, a game table, or a little theater. (Dunn, 1979, pp. 431-432)

The slow learner's needs can be met through the use of learning centers in the self-contained classroom. All of

Dunn's suggestions can be accomplished for the slow learner who finds it difficult to learn through conventional methods in the self-contained classroom (Dunn, 1979). Learning centers can meet the needs and can be the answer for the slow learner to achieve with success.

The slow learner's abilities and needs vary from one area to another. Therefore, the organized classrooms must allow the slow learner to be placed in groups appropriate to his abilities in relationship to various activities, (Heidmann, 1973) depending upon the slow learner's capabilities (Glasser, 1971). The tasks (Stevenson, 1974) should be kept simple and basic, without allowing boredom. However, should permit overlearning until more complex tasks can be mastered.

Bloom rates instructional quality upon the mastery of skills by the large majority of the group including the slow learners in the group (Bloom; Hastings & Madaus, 1971). Children who have achieved a skill with success tend to make the teacher's work easier for the following reasons:

1. Kids who have mastered the skill, no matter how long it took, enter the next learning task able to use that skill. If the learning sequence is arranged to build on previous units, subsequent steps will become easier.

2. Kids who have been given the extra time needed to reach mastery feel a little better about the subject, the teacher and themselves, which is another important element in helping them to do better in the next round.
3. Kids who have had to spend all that extra time to get up to mastery get the message that if they fail the next test, they'll have to go through it all again. As a result, they are likely to concentrate and work harder to master the work the first time through. (Marshall, 1977, p. 56)

Dloom (1971) further states that everyone benefits from a learning center approach that seems to give disproportionate attention to the slow learner. However, by using the right learning approach and system for the slow learner early enough, and on a consistent basis, the slow learner will be assisted. It will bridge the gap between the slower and faster learners (Marshall, 1977). Learning centers can do this for the slow learner by assisting him with success in a self-contained classroom.

#### The Slow Learner's Need For Individualization

Learners of various ages and intellectual capacities learn in various ways; however, some students achieve only through selected methods--methods and styles that may very frequently fail to produce academic success and results for others (Dunn & Dunn, 1979). Among experienced, sincere

and sensitive instructors, this is common knowledge. However, the continuation of the teaching of the identical lesson to an entire class in the same way, and at the same time and then requiring a demonstration of skill mastery within the same hour nevertheless continues (Dunn & Dunn, 1979).

Bloom (1971) contends that:

the task of a strategy for mastery learning is to find ways of altering the time individual students need for learning as well as ways of providing whatever time is needed by each. Thus, a strategy for mastery learning must find some way of solving the problems of instruction as well as of school organization (including the question of time). (Bloom, Hastings & Madaus, 1971, p. 51)

Bloom's contention is too often the case. The slow learner does not get the assistance essential for him to achieve with success in a self-contained classroom.

Success and learning for the slow learner in a self-contained classroom will bring about the enjoyment of school. Roland S. Earth, a former principal in New Haven, Connecticut, and Newton, Massachusetts, has identified the following characteristics for enjoyment of school and success:

1. A child's enjoyment of school is related to the number of significant options available to him each day.

2. A child's enjoyment of school is related to his having significant choice in determining the activity in which he will be engaged.
3. A child's enjoyment of school is related to his being able to pose his own problems and determine the manner in which he will pursue them . . . with respect to the materials and activities available to him.
4. A child's enjoyment of school is related to the extent he is permitted to collaborate with his peers.
5. A child's enjoyment of school is related to the extent to which he is trusted by adults.
6. A child is likely to enjoy school to the extent that it has a climate of instant order.
7. A child's enjoyment of school is associated with the extent to which explicit and implicit comparisons between his performance and the performance of other children are minimized. (Silberman, 1973, pp. 173-177)

Success and enjoyment are essential elements for learning to take place. However, all too often little consideration is really given to the needs of the slow learning individual child. In spite of the recognition that there are children of similar chronological ages differing

considerably, with respect to one another's intellectual capabilities and motor abilities (Dishop, 1971).

It is the instructor that must create and foster a successful personalized environment approach to learning in the self-contained classroom. Learning centers can assist the teacher to individualize and accomplish this; and much more enable the slow learning child to really achieve successfully in a self-contained classroom (Forte & Mackenzie, 1972).

By individualization of instruction through learning centers, Berry (1972) implies provisions in the educational programs in the self-contained classroom which are "tailored as much as possible to the personal interests, strengths and needs of each pupil" (p. 2).

Furthermore, each child is different and "many children are failing in our educational system because we have failed to recognize and/or respond to these differences" (Berry, 1972, p. 2).

Rubin and Dalow (1971) found that forty-one percent of a "normal" group of approximately 1,000 preschool children had become classified as "handicapped" in one way or another by the time they had reached fourth grade. The authors concluded,

The large proportion of children identified by teachers as needing special educational services raises serious questions about the ability of our educational system,

as presently organized and conducted, to adequately accommodate the broad range of individual differences found within the typical school population. (p. 299)

Derry (1972) contends that:

No longer can we afford wholesale teaching in which very different children are "taught" exactly the same thing at the same time. No longer can we allow large numbers of classroom casualties to be dumped in remedial programs. The State of California recently decided that Compensatory Education programs must now totally eliminate or drastically reduce remedial "pullout" programs in favor of individualized instruction in regular classrooms. This decision, I think, heralds a bright and vigorous future for individualization in this country. (p. 2)

Individualization in a self-contained classroom can be fostered through learning centers. For it is the instructor that really knows the slow learner's abilities and needs. Truly successful individualized instruction is designed by the instructor. It is only the teacher that is able to develop tasks tailored to the slow learner's abilities, weaknesses, interests, learning style and degree of self-discipline. Thus, permitting the slow learner to proceed at his own pace, on materials and projects that motivate and involve him (Dunn & Dunn, 1972).

Individualization is needed in the self-contained classroom for the slow learner because it allows:

1. Youngsters to learn in depth about things they find intriguing.
2. Youngsters to learn the various academic areas through different learning resources and media.
3. The slow learner a choice in the selection of various activities and assignments.
4. Learners to partake in a variety of instructional techniques.
5. Sequential additions or deletions of materials in relation to the student's needs. (Dunn & Dunn, 1972)

Learning centers can assist the slow learners by allowing for the adapting to individualization. Instructors in the self-contained classroom can appraise, adapt and modify activities to the slow learners' abilities, personality and interests (Dunn & Dunn, 1972). Slow learners in the self-contained classroom are individuals--"unique, valuable individuals" (Derry, 1972, p. 5) that can be assisted to succeed through learning centers.

Individualization is essential in self-contained classrooms. The lack of it denies success and the knowledge of individual differences and abilities. The following fable, entitled "Fable of the Activity Curriculum, or the Differences in Individual Differences," (Dunn & Dunn, 1972) by Reavis exemplifies what educators force on slow learners whose strengths and interests are often ignored in classrooms.



Once upon a time, the animals decided they must do something to meet the problems of "the new world," so they organized a school. They adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming, and flying, and to make it easier to administer all the animals took all subjects.

The duck was an excellent student in swimming, better in fact than the instructor, and made passing grades in flying, but he was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming to practice running. This was kept up until his web feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming. But average was acceptable in school, so nobody worried about that except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of the class in running but had a nervous breakdown because of so much makeup work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him jump from the ground up, instead of from the treetop down. He also developed charlie horses from overexertion and then got C in climbing and D in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In climbing class he beat all others to the

top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get there.

At the end of the year, an abnormal eel that could swim exceedingly well, and also run, climb and fly a little had the highest average and was valedictorian. (Dunn & Dunn, 1972, pp. 7-8)

This famous fable, written more than twenty years ago, nearly destroys the prescribed curriculum and casts much doubt on some elements of the instructional process. To require all children to pass through "fourth grade" while learning the same subjects at the same time with the identical degree of expected proficiency, denies individual differences among children just as surely as the Fable's activity curriculum forced the duck to run and the rabbit to swim--by the end of the school year!" (Dunn & Dunn, 1972, p. 8)

This is exactly what we do to our slow learners in a self-contained classroom when not allowing for assistance and individualization based on needs. Slow learner's weaknesses are indeed "hung 'round their necks" (Dunn & Dunn, 1972, pp. 7-8) while their many strengths and interests are all too often ignored. Learning centers in the self-contained classroom can assist the slow learner in weak areas, while building up abilities, interests, and self-image.

Individualization in a self-contained classroom requires an organization of learning centers which allows the learners to engage in activities unique to their style and rate of learning, while adding independence, and promoting maximum use of the available resources (Bishop, 1971). Teachers can gear activities to the slow learner through learning centers, while considering varying interests and needs (Bishop, 1971). Teachers can also achieve the goals and meet the needs of the slow learners "while meeting the goals of mass education" (National School Public Relations Association, 1975, p. 5).

Individualization for the slower learner in a self-contained classroom enables the recognition and provides for different learning styles of the slow learner by:

1. Diagnosing each student's perceptual strengths and weaknesses and then providing learning methods and materials that capitalize on the revealed strengths.
2. Diagnosing each student's academic ability in each curriculum area and then:
  - a) presenting a program that will build on the revealed academic strengths and reduce the revealed academic weaknesses;
  - b) providing learning materials on the level of academic comprehension revealed through the diagnosis;
  - c) providing a variety of learning materials to stimulate curiosity, offer repetition without

reducing interest and create a personal involvement with the act of learning for the student

3. Recognizing each student's special interests, hobbies, skills, talents or motivations and incorporating these, wherever appropriate, into the child's curriculum. (Dunn & Dunn, 1972, p. 41)

The need for individualization for the slow learner in a self-contained classroom can also assist the learning style of the learner. Individualization can also give varying degrees of attention to slow learner's readiness, special needs and learning styles (Heathers, 1977).

The individualization of instruction for the slow learner in a self-contained classroom, can provide opportunities for various rates of learning. Individualization can eliminate failure, thereby making success relevant to the slow learner's needs and abilities (Dunn & Dunn, 1972). Improvement in the self-contained classroom is vital. However, the lack of individualization in self-contained classrooms may actually "block" learning, thus, promoting conformity. The slow learner requires encouragement and recognition of his abilities (Dunn & Dunn, 1972).

Within the self-contained classroom, many common fallacies and realities exist about learning, thus hampering the individualization for the slow learning child in a self-contained classroom. The realities and fallacies that Dunn and Dunn (1972) point out are:

FALLACY # 1: Children learn by listening.

REALITY: Children may learn by listening, but are more likely to learn by talking, doing and teaching.

FALLACY # 2: A class of twenty-five or more children can learn identical contents in a specific period of time.

REALITY: Children learn different amounts of content at different rates at different times; they also vary in the amount they retain.

FALLACY # 3: Children can absorb the same content to the same depth.

REALITY: Children can all learn something about a given topic but each child has a greater or lesser capacity to absorb details, concepts and nuances of meaning. Here too, much of the result depends upon interest and an understanding of the frame of reference of each youngster.

FALLACY # 4: All children can learn if they will listen and "concentrate."

REALITY: Each youngster has a unique learning style that may differ slightly or radically from that of his peers.

FALLACY # 5: A quiet school is a good school.

REALITY: A quiet school is a subdued school, where children have been coerced into patterns of behavior that are unnatural to youth.

FALLACY # 6: Children should be admitted to school when they become five years of age.

REALITY: Children should be admitted to school when they are "ready" to learn.

FALLACY # 7: It is better for children to remain on "grade level" with youngsters of the same chronological age rather than to work with either younger or older children.

REALITY: It is better for children to be working at their maximum individual capacities with either similar or different age groups than to be bored by being unchallenged or frustrated because they are unable to compare themselves favorably with their peers.

FALLACY # 8: There are special teaching methods that are panaceas for instructing children: e.g., "discovery" in social studies, "phonics" in reading, "projects" in science, etc.

REALITY: There is no single panacea that can offer every child (or most children) an easy way to learn a topic, content area or skill.

FALLACY # 9: The teacher should be accountable for the child's learning.

REALITY: The child should be accountable for his learning.

FALLACY # 10: A "great" teacher must be an excellent actor or actress.

REALITY: A great teacher establishes rapport, respect and a climate that creates a personalized joy of learning and achieving for each of his students.

FALLACY # 11: Young children need a "mother substitute" or "anchor." Therefore, the self-contained classroom where one teacher is responsible for a group of children is the best organizational pattern for primary grades.

REALITY: Young children need a variety of challenging activities and many require warm and responsive adults; other children need loving parents; others need opportunities to become independent and responsible.

FALLACY # 12: Each teacher knows what is "best" for the children in her class.

REALITY: Every teacher is not like every other teacher; some are excellent diagnosticians, some are effective prescribers, some are outstanding guides and some are excellent at all or none of these functions.

FALLACY # 13: Children learn best through repeated sequential periods that are spaced throughout the school day and year and are "articulated" with the same subject in succeeding days and years.

REALITY: Children learn best through a variety of structured and unstructured approaches.

FALLACY # 14: Education takes place between the hours of 8:30 AM and 3:00 PM when children are in school.

REALITY: Learning occurs whenever children are actively involved in stimulating experiences on their level of ability.

(Dunn & Dunn, 1972, pp. 22-29)

Among these traditional fallacies and realities, the error of "omission" is also a current educational practice in the self-contained classroom. For within the self-contained classroom, the slow learner must be acknowledged for his own learning style. Self-contained classrooms must "capitalize on existing knowledge of varying "learning styles". In order for slow learners to achieve success in a self-contained classroom, learning centers are needed to assist their learning style. This is of utmost importance! (Dunn & Dunn, 1972, p. 29) If this is neglected, the slow learner is a victim of a "great crime" (Dunn & Dunn, 1972, p. 221). For the very development of personal values, love



of learning and the student's ability to see and acquire knowledge is at stake (Dunn & Dunn, 1972). The slow learner must have "structure, support and success" in their daily classroom lives (Meyer, 1976, p. 207).

Individualization for the slow learner in a self-contained classroom "recognizes that there is no standard child, that each is an individual who learns in his own way and in his own time" (National School Public Relations Association, 1975, p. 2). Individualization through learning centers in the self-contained classroom will motivate the slow learner by helping him find his own areas of interest, then giving him assistance to pursue his needs and capabilities (National School Public Relations Association, 1975). It is the slow learner in the self-contained classroom that has a need for "structure, support, and success" (Meyer, 1976, p. 206).

Meeting these needs of the slow learner in a self-contained classroom is the responsibility of the school and the teacher. These needs can be met by "creating an environment and opportunities" (Ishler, 1974, p. 4) which are challenging and facilitate the slow learner in learning through learning centers in the self-contained classroom (Ishler, 1974).

Ishler (1974) cites four basic principles by which learning centers can facilitate individualization in the self-contained classroom and can assist the slow learner.

1. There is a real understanding and appreciation for the uniqueness of each child.
2. Children learn from experience and from active participation in the exploration of their environment.
3. Children learn at different rates.
4. Children learn through different styles. (p. 4)

The self-contained classroom with learning centers can encourage slow learners by leaving them free to learn in their own ways at their own pace, but within the security of a carefully planned success-orientated environment (Ishler, 1974).

The slow learner must achieve with success, and can do so if given the chance. Heinrich (1968) discussed the recommendations given to Boards of Education and Administrative Staff in relationship to slow learners. Some of the recommendations for slow learners presented are:

1. Bring slow learners into school at an earlier age--age three to four.
2. Give slow learners individual programs specifically designed to fit their needs, capacities and limitations.
  - a. Tutorial instruction
  - b. Small classes

c. Special class

They offer the slow learner instruction aimed specifically at him. The teacher can more easily select suitable materials and methods.

They offer him a greater chance of social acceptance and adjustment (there is some research to prove this).

They reduce personal frustrations.

They reduce the financial costs of failure and grade repetition.

d. Nongrading

3. Emphasize the basic tools--reading, writing, and mathematics--all through the slow learner's schooling.
4. Allow the slow learners to graduate.
5. Work constantly to improve the attitude of the entire faculty toward slow learners.
6. Try out new ways of teaching slow learners. (pp. 13-17)

Individualization within the self-contained classroom according to Dunn and Dunn (1972) allows slow learners time revealed needs to be adapted to thus enabling the teacher flexibility within this approach.

Table 1 outlines the main areas for the slow learner in a self-contained classroom and how individualization can enhance the areas.

Table 1  
 Characteristics of Individualization That  
 Slow Learners in a Self-Contained Cla

Characteristics	Self-Contained Classroom
TEACHER APPRAISAL	Individual teacher perspective of student ability and growth in all curriculum areas.
PEER RELATIONSHIPS	Permits development of strong peer group ties.
TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY	Requires the teacher to teach in multiple curriculum areas.
INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES	Demands individual knowledge and supervision of large- and small-group instructional techniques.
STUDENT INTEREST	
STUDENT GROWTH	Unless individualized, tends to move students ahead as a class or or in groups.
MEDIA AND MATERIALS	If individualized, requires extensive media and materials in every curriculum area.
TEACHER PLANNING	Permits individual teacher planning.
TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS	Maximum teacher effectiveness usually occurs with homogeneous pupil grouping.

Individualization for the slow learner in a self-contained classroom tends to "personalize and humanize" a child's interests in learning (Dunn & Dunn, 1972, p. 224).

Smith (1977) alludes to "a different mode of teaching that can contribute to individualized learning and can be adapted to personality and teaching-style preferences of most teachers" (p. 361). Learning centers in the self-contained classroom can be extremely adaptive for the teacher and the slow learner. Ollila (1977) advocates that the skilled teacher of the slow learner should be aware of the significance and impact of motivation in teaching and learning. Further cognizance of general principles to improve and involve children in learning is significant. Thus Ollila (1977) points out the

1. Importance of child involvement of learning.
  2. Progression of various modes of learning from concrete modes to more abstract ones.
  3. Function of tasks analysis in teaching and learning.
- (p. 43)

Individualization according to Dunn and Dunn (1975) encourages and enhances "repeated exposure (frequency) to selected studies through multiple learning resources (variety), tends to reinforce the material in the student's memory and within a conscious frame of reference" (p. 39).

Learning centers and individualization thus enable slow learning students, within the self-contained classroom, to feel "a strong sense of pride and accomplishment when they can demonstrate that they have completed their instructional objectives successfully" (Dunn & Dunn, 1972, p. 107). Emphasis on the learning centers and individualized instruction focuses upon each slow learner's needs, abilities, learning styles, motivation and rate of learning.

Bishop (1971) contends that individualization is a basic survival need for the slow learner, obtainable through the use of learning centers. Classrooms need to be "more individuality and humanistically oriented" (p. ix). He further contends that

professionals equipped with methods and techniques designed only for group consumption in the conventional self-contained classroom must be retrained in order to provide appropriate instructional alternatives for the individual as a unique, creative entity. Conventional educational programs are inadequate and obsolete when we consider the diversity of skills, conceptual development, attitudes and values, and capabilities required and rightfully demanded by students for survival in our complex technological society. (p. ix)

Learning centers can attain this for slow learners in a self-contained classroom. Individualization recognizes the needs and abilities of each slow learner.

Once educators recognize that children are extremely different from each other in their ability to learn, in their interests and motivation, in their ability to sustain concentration and be self-disciplined and in their perceptual strengths and weaknesses, it will become more evident that most daily class and large-group instruction are appropriate to long-range, effective learning for the individual. (Dunn & Dunn 1972, p. 31)

Learning centers can foster individualization. Sequential learning activities, according to Cooley (1975) can be matched to each learner's needs and interests. However, individualization through learning centers "do not require students to be taught on a one-to-one basis, do assume student's needs and interests are being assessed on an individual basis and that instruction is prescribed" (p. 20).

Individualized programs may vary in the elements of instruction they individualize and the degree of individualization in those elements (Cooley, 1975). Learning centers in the self-contained classroom can assist the slow learner to success in these areas.

The slow learner's daily school experiences, according to Dunn and Dunn (1972) "should include the sharing of information with others. Peer and multiage interaction reinforce learning" (p. 146). Learning centers can develop

this as well as they can individualize instruction for the slow learner. Hence, learning centers can facilitate individualization "because each student becomes a unique entity and the instructional program can be tailored to fit him and his special requirements, individualization is a type of instruction in which the student engages in activities appropriate to his own learning style" (Bishop, 1971, p. 35).

Learning centers can assist the slow learner to progress with success in a self-contained classroom being that it "promotes flexible grouping and continuous progress, and permits the utilization of meaningful individualized instruction" (Smith, 1977, p. 21).

"Capitalizing upon the uniqueness of each child," (Burdin, 1976, p. 194) educators, through the use of learning centers, can "create readiness for new concepts and meaningful educational experiences. When motivated through competent guidance and stimulated by learning opportunities; the individual can begin to attain maximum potentialities" (Burdin, 1976, p. 194). Therefore, the slow learner can achieve with success in a self-contained classroom.

The need for individualization Burdin (1976) indicates is "stronger than it has ever been" (p. 194). Due to Individual differences abound among so-called normal children. While their growth patterns have similar characteristics over the long haul, certainly the day-to-



day and week-to-week variations make individualization a necessity. (p. 194)

This necessity, which Goodlad pointed out back in 1959, still persists today. Thus the "increasing awareness of variation in children's abilities and attainments . . . " (p. 4) continues and must be dealt with. Ishler (1974) further indicates that "a facilitative environment must be developed within our school wherein students, no matter what their levels of abilities, can succeed" (pp. 84-85). Learning centers can assist the slow learner in a self-contained classroom. Individualization and various ability needs can successfully be met through learning centers. The slow learner progresses at his own rate, with that rate being governed by his own interests, background and ability (Bishop, 1971).

The individualization of instruction, as Block (1977) views it, is "a process for providing each student with a 'variety of effective ways' to learn" (p. 337). These "effective ways" of providing for the differences in learning take into account slow learner's capacity to learn; motivation to learn, and learning style (Burdin, 1976). Learning centers can assist each slow learning child in meeting his needs. Learning centers provide success through individualization for the slow learner and thereby foster potential growth (Smith, 1977).

### The Slow Learner's Need for Learning Centers

Classroom learning centers can provide and meet the individual needs of each slow learning child, by providing for differences, capitalizing on strengths and special interests (Mummert, 1974).

Learning centers can assist the provision of individualization of instruction for the slow learning child (Forte & Mackenzie, 1972). Providing for these individual needs within a self-contained classroom is a dilemma that has faced instructors throughout the history of education. This dilemma becomes even more acute in the case of the slow learning child, who requires even more attention to meet his needs, than do his peers (Gingell, 1973; Heidmann, 1973; and Scanlon & Brown, 1971).

Within a self-contained classroom, methods in teaching are varied and most teachers find the need to adapt methods to the children they teach and the different skills being taught. We come back yet again to realize that the prime consideration in the job of teaching must be the individual. Different children will respond better to different methods. (Gingell, 1973, p. 51)

Bishop (1971) contends that the manner and approaches of instruction are easier to "deplore than to change" (p. vii). However, the "work in school should be directed to enable a child to fit in successfully and happily with his contemporaries" (Gingell, 1973, p. 51).

Learning centers within a self-contained classroom should be as inviting and attractive as possible (Hainen, 1977). Thus, learning centers within the self-contained classroom assist the slow learning child. Learning centers within a self-contained classroom

consist of any one area within the classroom itself, established temporarily or permanently for the purpose of providing pupils with differentiated learning experiences in the form of an individual or group activity, to which pupils may be directed by the teacher or may be given the opportunity to select, manage, and evaluate the experiences of which the center is composed. The learning center may constitute an individual desk, a cluster of desks, an area on the floor, a bulletin board, or chalkboard, a table, a file cabinet, or a bookshelf. It may be teacher-constructed, pupil-constructed, or the result of a teacher-pupil effort. (Thomas, 1975, p. xiii)

The learning center for the slow learner within the self-contained classroom allows for the slow learner and his peers to find their own way, in their own time, according to their own needs (Klein, 1977; Thomas, 1975).

Learning centers can assist and enable the slow learner to meet the societal objectives that Dunn and Dunn (1972) discuss within the self-contained classroom. They are as follows:

- to prevent dropouts in and out of the classroom
- to prevent unproductive conflict with society

- to prevent the continuing waste of human and natural resources
- to promote the self-realization of all individuals and groups. (p. 222)

Dunn and Dunn (1972) further cite individual objectives of a relevant system of instruction within a learning-centered, self-contained classroom.

- to develop a love for learning
- to establish a positive self-image as a unique person capable of worthwhile contributions
- to increase personal motivation and commitment
- to train for continuing self- and other teaching
- to elevate expectations for self and others
- to design opportunities for experiencing and creating
- to foster responsibility
- to develop accurate appraisal skills
- to promote spirit of exploration and individuality
- to instill a positive attitude toward acceptance of others and their individuality
- to create an appreciation of and joy for living
- to build a personalized data bank of appropriate and desired knowledge
- to learn how to identify and solve problems and make decisions
- to use and apply knowledge by appraisal, determination of relevant factors, selection of alternative

solutions, defense of the selected action, application and implementation of planned actions and evaluation and revision of current systems. (p. 222)

Self-contained classroom learning centers enable the educators of the slow learning child to fit the program to the child--"a far more complex task than expecting children to fit programs" (Klein, 1977, p. 40). The teacher must find a balance between the slow learner's capabilities and the expected and intended program for the child (Klein, 1977).

Learning centers within the self-contained classroom "are not new ways of teaching. They just represent one good method of organizing content and materials to make learning easier and more enjoyable for some children!" (Forte & Mackenzie, 1972, p. 15).

Within the learning centers in a self-contained classroom, the teacher can aid slow learners indirectly, by exposing various experiences, "questioning, responding, and encouraging pupils to pursue selected courses" (Thomas, 1975, p. 9). Thomas (1975) further suggests eleven important components in a classroom environment.

1. A pressure-free setting
2. Independent learning
3. Multisensory learning
4. Differentiated learning
5. Diversified activities
6. Pupil input

7. Pupil interaction
8. Creative action
9. Self-pacing
10. Self-selection and management
11. Self-evaluation and responsibility. (p. 9)

The teacher of the self-contained classroom with learning centers can build experiences which help to develop the slow learner's trust, love of, and the respect for each other. The learning centers encourage the slow learners "to express their values, suggest courses of learning, and assist in formulating responsible rules of behavior so that development may take place" (Thomas, 1975, p. 10).

Further, learning centers enable the slow learner to explore and expand according to individual needs and abilities. (Thomas, 1975). Learning centers within the self-contained classroom furthermore reportedly reduce tension in slow learners and increase teacher awareness of pupil individuality (Goodlad, 1959). They also focus upon what the children can do for themselves, rather than what should be done for them. The focus upon the slow learner's self is further stressed by capitalizing upon the slow learner's

1. honesty
  2. natural inquisitiveness
  3. initiative
  4. resourcefulness
  5. independence, thus develops pupil's self-concepts
- (Thomas, 1975, p. 10).

Learning centers within the self-contained classroom can assist the slow learner to success by meeting his needs and concerns "to help him overcome his fears and anxieties and satisfy his curiosities" (Smith, 1977, p. 28).

The self-contained classroom learning centers satisfy the slow learners needs to work together "to help each other, and to learn from each other" (Smith, 1977, p. 28).

Smith (1977) feels that learning centers in the self-contained classroom can provide slow learners with assistance:

- . to provide an opportunity for every child to learn according to his own growth pattern
- . to establish for each child a pattern of success in school experiences
- . to eliminate artificial grade barriers so that the faster-moving child will not have to mark time
- . to permit the slower-moving child to progress with satisfaction and success at his own rate
- . to permit each child to be taught at his best learning level
- . to provide for each child a curriculum adapted to his growth pattern . (pp. 31-32)

Thus, this assistance for the slow learners can lead to the establishment of more specific goals. Goals to--

1. Help each child find satisfaction in learning.
2. Help each child realize that subject matter skills are tools he should use in meeting and solving problems.
3. Help each child develop self-confidence.
4. Help each child think imaginatively and openly explore his ideas.
5. Help each child free himself to explore the resources of the school, both human beings and materials, as well as his own resources.
6. Help each child assume responsibility for his own learning.
7. Help each child to become self-directed and self-disciplined. (Smith, 1977, p. 32)

The Trump Plan, described by Glasser (1971) calls for a "Learning Resources Center," which is to be a part of the whole school program, not just an enrichment offering to some learners. Glasser (1971) indicates that

The heart of the school program is what is called independent study or learning. Here is where students, in addition to covering the subject as determined by their teachers, go beyond the minimum essentials to



inquire and to create as their individual interests and talents dictate; they learn how to learn, and develop more responsibility for their own learning. (p. 212)

"The foregoing quote is a goal statement, Trump says that ' . . . today's teaching methods and school organization frequently get in the way of those pupils' goals' (Glasser, 1971, p. 212). The typical classroom lacks" the following which the Trump Plan is meant to do:

1. Provide for individual differences and abilities;
2. Meet the test of practicality; i.e., the student is studying something important and useful to him;
3. Permit study in depth;
4. Develop the ability to go it alone, to learn by doing;
5. Produce in many students greater creativity and a sense of inquiry. (Glasser, 1971, p. 213)

The slow learner within the self-contained classroom can be assisted by learning centers. Thus,

the learning center aims to provide a school framework within which the individual child may procure the guidance, climate and media to learn and find purpose and joy in learning. Opportunities are provided for the individual's learning needs and for creating and developing his interests. (Glasser, 1971, p. 18)

Glasser (1971) further contends that a child must be guided in using these opportunities to choose materials and join activities that will provide a learning challenge and success. In addition, it is our aim to help the youngster to evaluate his goals. (p. 18)

The slow learner is greatly encouraged to broaden his learning by increasing his own learning decisions (Glasser, 1971).

Individualization within the self-contained classroom, fostered through learning centers can develop attention to (1) meet the needs of the slow learner, (2) readiness and the (3) learning style of each student by employing the following modes of individualization described by Heathers (1977):

1. At any level of schooling, different students can work on different learning tasks toward different goals.
2. Different students can use different learning materials or equipment in working toward the same learning goal.
3. Different students can study a given task in different types of individual or group settings.
4. Different students can work on a given learning task with use of different methods of teaching/learning.

5. Different students can be assigned to different teachers to produce effective student/teacher match-ups. The personality and teaching style of the teacher are important in determining how well a given student progresses. Taking this into account in assigning students to teachers is an important form of individualization.
6. Different students can be allowed different amounts of time as needed to complete a learning task. (p. 344)

We, as educators, as parents, and as teachers, are in charge of the greatest treasure society possesses, the next generation. The urgent question which confronts us today is whether we will be able to guide them into becoming capable and responsible human beings or whether we will have to wait until youth itself claims its right to proper guidance and education. This question will be decided, in our opinion, by our ability to change from a punitive, retaliatory, and mistake-centered educational practice to one of encouragement for all those who have failed to find their way toward fulfillment. (Dinkmeyer, 1963, pp. 124-125)

Learning centers are essential in the self-contained classroom for the slow learner, since children learn in different ways and at different rates (Forte & Mackenzie, 1972). Learning centers can facilitate individualization, and thus engage students in activities that are appropriate to their learning style (Dishop, 1971). Learning centers

also allow the teacher the opportunity to work with the individual slow learner, a small group of students or the entire group of students (Webb & Howard, 1977; Hainen, 1979).

Learning centers within the self-contained classroom do assist the slow learner to proceed with success. However, the essential ingredient of individualization is the teacher's knowledge of student's strengths and needs.

However, it seems that the presence of learning centers in a classroom has a strong tendency to encourage truly individualized thinking and programming. It is a relatively simple and enjoyable way, usually for teachers and pupils to begin to reorganize for a more individualized program. (Deery, 1972, p. 49)

Learning centers can provide the slow learner with success in a self-contained classroom, by allowing his needs and abilities to be more individually met (Dunn, 1972; Messick, 1976). The learning centers can assist the slow learner at his level in a variety of learning situations (Diernan, 1975). Learning centers also enable the teacher in the self-contained classroom to vary the instructional styles and strategies in accordance with the success of the slow learner (McCarthy, 1977; Turner, 1977).

Dunn and Dunn (1972) further indicate that slow learners who are exposed to information repeatedly, thus frequently and in a variety of ways in accordance with the individual's learning style, will "enhance learning and tend to retain what they have absorbed" (p. 40). Thus,

frequency, intensity, repetition, and variety are readily obtainable through the use of learning centers. Thus learning centers offer assistance to the slow learner in a self-contained classroom.

Thomas (1977) alludes to five anticipated and expected results in the use of learning centers to aid and assist the slow learner in a self-contained classroom.

1. Invites students to take responsibility for the purposes, procedures, and activities of the classroom;
2. Clarifies directions, management, and limitations of learning experiences;
3. Develops students' capacities to make appropriate decisions;
4. Increases students' knowledge and understanding of the contributions of others;
5. Builds classroom unity, cohesiveness, and togetherness. (p. 348)

Glasser (1971) further cites seven expected results from the use of learning centers that aid the slow learner in a self-contained classroom:

1. Students take responsibility for their own learning.
2. Students become more self-reliant.
3. A better self-image is developed.
4. Continuous learning can be expected after formal schooling is completed.

5. Responsible leadership will be evidenced.
6. Student academic achievement will be as high if not higher than before.
7. Student attitudes toward learning will be improved. (p. 141)

Learning centers repeatedly enable self-pacing for the slow learner within the self-contained classroom. Individualized instruction can be enhanced by sequencing the presentation of learning tasks in accordance with the slow learner's learning style, within the self-contained classroom (Saettler, 1969).

If slow learning children are to "develop their intellectual potential, the school must provide an environment that is intellectually stimulating and in which achievement of an intellectual nature is respected and nurtured" (Smith, 1977, p. 361).

Fox and Franke (1979) allude to the nationwide attention that learning centers have received within the past five years, as a means of improving instruction in the classroom for the slow learner. They further contend that learning centers provide children with a break from routine classroom activity; motivate them to accept responsibility for some of their own learning by giving them interesting activities associated with

learning; reinforce instruction and provide for practice; give the student immediate feedback or other satisfactions; and free the teacher to work with small groups or individuals while the rest of the students are gainfully occupied" (p. 221).

Thus the use of learning centers within the self-contained classroom for assistance to the slow learner has definite advantages for both the slow learner and the instructor.

The advantages for the slow learner according to Lloyd (1974) are:

- to practice making decisions
- to practice following directions
- to practice working independently
- to practice new learnings and to reinforce old learnings
- to develop skills in working with other students
- to learn from other students
- to take responsibility for the use and care of materials. (p. 4)

Lloyd (1974) further cites the advantages for the instructor using learning centers as follows:

- being able to work undisturbed with small groups or individuals
- being able to circulate and observe pupils, thereby gaining information about their work habits, skills, attitudes, and so on. (p. 4)

Goals to further the value of learning centers within the self-contained classroom are:

1. To provide opportunities for children to pursue individual interests and projects, either as a result and extension of classroom activities or on the student's initiative.
2. To provide opportunities for children to increase their skills in areas such as reading, mathematics and writing.
3. To provide for new techniques and materials which may be either not economical or ill-suited for classroom use.
4. To provide a variety of enrichment and/or provocative experiences.
5. To provide an opportunity for children to acquire appropriate library and study skills.
6. To provide experiential opportunity of a sort that will enable a student to gain in the ability to use his time "well." (Glasser, 1971, p. 27)

The few, but vitally important characteristics that are common to all learning centers according to Forte and Mackenzie (1972) are:

1. A learning center must include multi-level activities or experiences to meet the instructional needs of every child who will visit the center.



2. A learning center must offer choices and alternatives in the tasks it requires, giving every student a part in planning and executing his own learning; thus his personal interests and needs become a part of the curriculum rather than a predetermined curriculum becoming an enforced part of him.
3. Factors which greatly and directly influence the success of a center are:
  - Its neatness and attractiveness
    - Is it a pleasant, comfortable place to work?
    - Is it beckoning--from across the room?
  - Its immediate motivational qualities.
    - Does it arouse curiosity, perhaps offer a hint of intrigues?
    - Does it capitalize on personal and group interests?
    - Is there any good reason a child should be anxious to work there?
  - The clarity and simplicity with which procedures are outlined or directions are given.
    - Can directions be easily read and understood without difficulty, allowing tasks to be easily effected without additional help from the teacher?
  - The quality and apparent value to the student of its evaluative devices.

-- Are the provisions for self-evaluation precise and purposeful enough to provide meaningful information to both student and teacher? (pp. 9-10)

Successful learning centers for the slow learner, within the self-contained classroom also have basic "rules-of-thumb" according to Forte and Mackenzie (1972).

Here are some that many teachers have found helpful:

1. Center activities may or may not be ordered for sequential development.
2. Experiences may be designed to be enjoyed by individual children or by two or three--or perhaps as many as six children working together.
3. Effective use of a center is more often than not facilitated by an initial presentation or explanation of the new center's intended purpose and operational procedures. This introduction may be made by the teacher or by pupils.
4. Time limitations may be imposed for the use of each center, but these must remain flexible enough to make allowances for the pupils who will need more time, and yet encourage efficient performance in all pupils.
5. The number of pupils who may visit a given center at one time may be an appropriate decision for students to make as a network of "ground rules" for efficient use of centers.

Note: Permanent ground rules may govern the use of some centers. On the other hand,

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any new center may require new decisions related to its use.

6. Movement to and from or between centers must be well-coordinated with other activities in the instructional program. (In areas of limited space, a definite traffic pattern or right-of-way system may have to be specified.)
7. Execution of center activities is not necessarily limited to the physical area designated as the learning center. In many instances, children may be directed to other areas in or outside of the classroom for completion of activities.
8. Life, vitality, and enthusiasm for a given center are engendered by change. Some centers will change every day, others once a week. Still others may remain constant for a longer period. It is expedient, however, to keep in mind that in a learning center society, neither tradition nor "old age" is cherished or revered.
9. Variety is the spice of life--an old adage, but a wise one. When several centers are in use in one classroom, careful attention must be given to the balance of design in centers.
  - Some provide for active involvement, others for more quiet activity.
  - Some require only short attention, others demand time for long-term development.

- Some offer experiences in reading and writing; others will be non-verbal in their design.
- Some are designed for individual work, others for the cooperative efforts of pairs or small groups.
- Some will be open-ended and experimental in nature; others will be more structured in presentation of content.
- Some may be completely pupil-structured (yes, even unedited by the teacher!) and others totally prepared by the teacher.

10. At each center which does not, by nature, provide for individual ability level and freedom of choice, a system will need to be developed for indicating what activities and alternatives are reserved to which students. (Forte & Mackenzie, 1972, pp. 10-13) Nations (1976) further believes that learning

centers can:

- Help students become self-motivated
- Help students learn at their individual paces
- Help students and their teachers know one another better as persons--not just as stereotyped "students to be taught" and "teacher who teach"

- Help students develop their own goals--sometimes with, sometimes without, the help of teachers and/or other students
- Provide opportunities for students to evaluate their own progress
- Help students learn how to work independently
- Provide opportunities for students to learn from one another--to give help and to receive it
- Provide opportunities for students to explore different ways of learning and to find the ways that work best for them. This should be a continuing exploration, with freedom and encouragement to try something again that wasn't successful the first time around
- Help students use different ways of communicating ideas, information, and feelings
- Help students become acquainted with various learning resources and learn how to use them
- Help students develop a multi-faceted approach to learning as they discover that there are many kinds of knowledge, skills, and ways of acquiring and using them
- Provide teachers with many opportunities for assessing needs and achievements of individuals and the group and for planning appropriate learning experiences; provide opportunities for students to participate in these activities. (p. 10)

Learning centers within the self-contained classroom, for the slow learner, can be used in a variety of ways, depending only upon the purpose that the instructor has in mind. McCarthy (1977) has indicated that learning centers can be multi-purpose, depending upon the "different needs of the pupil," (p. 293) within the self-contained classroom. According to McCarthy (1977) learning centers can provide:

1. Total learning environment

The entire instructional program is individualized for each child. Pupils engage in small-group and individual activities at various learning stations throughout the room. Teacher-conducted learning activities are kept at a minimum and are used only when adult leadership is necessary.

2. Remedial work

Pupils who have not mastered basic skills are assigned to learning centers to work intensively on those skills. Pupils work with audio-visual materials and individualized-instruction programs or help one another as peer tutors.

3. Drill work

To reinforce knowledge or skills learned in regular classroom instruction, pupils are assigned to learning centers equipped with materials for drill work.

#### 4. Interest activities

At specific times during the day, pupils are assigned to areas of their choice to work on activities they enjoy such as arts and crafts, games, puzzles, science experiments, or cooking. Pupils who have earned free time or pupils who need a change of pace, can be assigned to these areas.

#### 5. Enrichment activities

Pupils who are fast learners are assigned to a learning-center activity designed to enhance their recent learning and to challenge them to go beyond the material presented to the entire class.

Each teacher should carefully decide how the learning centers can most profitably be designed to meet the unique needs of the children in his or her classroom. In short, the types of activities offered in the centers should be determined by careful diagnosis of the pupils' needs.

Although learning centers are usually associated with self-directed activities for pupils, centers are not limited to this approach. If all the pupils are engaging in center activities simultaneously, one or more stations may be teacher directed. Also, paraprofessionals, volunteers, or pupils who have specific talents could direct centers

at various times. If the purpose of learning centers is to offer more options to pupils, provisions should be made for differences in learning styles as well as differences in academic levels and interests. (pp. 293-294)

Learning centers within the self-contained classroom, where students can practice (McCarthy, 1977) something new:

- should be based on the needs of the children who will be using them
- should provide for practice of a particular behavior
- should provide for practice of skills that have been just taught or taught within the last month
- should include materials that can be self-checking or that can quickly be checked by pupil, teacher, or aide
- should, wherever possible, build on previous learning
- should involve the child actively
- should be enjoyable and of interest to the child

To illustrate, a primary-level handwriting center might have boxes of manuscript letters, plus student names written on individual strips in which the directions for correctly forming the letters are shown by arrows. Each container would also have one to three sentences on individual strips.

Such a center fits the above criteria by being geared to pupils in the class who need work on forming



letters correctly. Each child will be forming letters correctly as he traces letters or copies his name or a sentence. The skills of forming letters are currently being taught in the classroom. Pupils can self-check by using the arrows. The activity builds on other eye-hand coordination skills, such as cutting on lines and following other patterns. Each child is involved actively in forming letters. It is interesting and enjoyable in that the child sees his own product and subsequent improvement, while doing something on his own. (Lloyd, 1974, p. 6)

Learning Centers Where Pupils Learn Something New--

- . should give the objective, or what is to be learned.  
(For example, "You will learn other words that mean "little," "big," "happy," and "sad.")
- . should make clear (through the teacher, perhaps) the purpose for learning whatever is featured.  
("This is good to know because . . ." or "You are learning this so that when you are talking with or writing to someone, or reading, you will know the meaning of words that mean the same thing. Then you can make your conversation and writing more interesting.")

- should emphasize only one new learning. (After having already learned to use a dictionary and the meanings of little, big, happy, and sad, the child is asked only to learn the meanings of four new words.)
- should give several opportunities to practice the new learning. (Pupils might be asked to write three or four sentences using two of the new words).

#### Learning Centers Where Pupils Create Something--

- should provide the opportunity for creativity. (For example, making a collage at an art center gives the child a chance to use his own ideas.)
- should provide the opportunity for problem solving and critical thinking. (In making a collage the child decides where to place certain materials, how large a space to cover, and what colors look well together.)
- should provide an opportunity to use and extend skills and abilities. (In making a collage, the child extends visual and coordination skills and abilities.) (Lloyd, 1974, p. 7)

All too often learning centers within the self-contained classroom are "set aside" areas, Areas where the learners can go "only when their assigned work has been completed" (Thomas, 1975 p. 40). The self-contained classroom's learning center for the slow learner

should be the starting point for the pupils from which subsequent experiences will evolve. Setting aside activities in which pupils may participate after completing the required work of the classroom misses the point of the learning centers. In fact, it denies the well-documented theory that children inform us when and what they wish to learn. (Thomas, 1975, p. 40)

Learning centers can meet the slow learner's need for strengthening in "attending, responding, following directions, understanding environment, working for social approval and completing academic subject matter" (Martin, 1977, p. 203).

In developing the self-contained classroom learning centers, Thomas (1975) always keeps in mind that "children learn what and when they wish to learn" (p. 40).

Thus, learning centers can assist slow learning: Children turned off by school and what it offers need a change of pace, a new kind of challenge, a learning task they not only can take on but can succeed with. Children frustrated by their inability to read need materials with a new inviting look to help them build concepts and develop motor skills, eye-hand coordination, visual and auditory discrimination. Children struggling to develop math concepts need manipulative devices to help them understand one-to-one relationship and

visualize basic number facts and operations. Children of average and above average abilities need a challenge and stimulating materials to keep them working enthusiastically in their quest for knowledge.

(Mummert, 1974, p. 7)

Learning centers for the slow learner within the self-contained classroom can increase interest, and attention, and thus reduce boredom through the slow learner's selection of learning activities (Dunn, 1972). Learning centers can allow the slow learner, as an individual, to grow at his own rate, as rapidly as he can and along the paths elected by him (Dunn & Dunn, 1979).

Variety of methods and materials will also enhance the slow learner's independence and interdependence when learning centers are used in the self-contained classroom (Dunn & Dunn, 1979). Learning centers within the self-contained classroom will also assist the teachers to contribute to the slow learner's self concepts. This is further enhanced by taking advantage of the opportunities to give the slow learner "attention, encouragement, and praise" (Heather, 1977, p. 345).

Heather (1977) further cites that individualization can be assisted by learning centers within a self-contained classroom in that

when students work on tasks designed for them and share in decisions about those tasks, their sense of individuality and personal worth should be enhanced. Also, when

students are enabled to master their learning tasks routinely, they should have an improved sense of their competence and personal worth. (p. 345)

Learning centers can enhance encouragement for the slow learner, thus fostering self-confidence within the self-contained classroom. "The child's difficulties are usually caused by some form of discouragement. He will be deficient if he lacks self-confidence" (Dinkmeyer, 1963, pp. 27-28). Success-oriented learning centers can increase the slow learner's sense of strength and self-worth (Dinkmeyer, 1963).

Learning centers can motivate slow learners by enabling them to "reach a specific goal in order to seek satisfaction of a need" (Ollila, 1977, p. 40). Ollila (1977) further contends that successful learning depends upon motivation and reinforcement. The self-contained classroom's learning center enables slow learners to attain success through reinforcement, thus "the response the learner makes results in arriving at the goal," (p. 40) further reinforcing success.

Learning centers within the self-contained classroom allow the teacher to develop "programs for self-renewal" by allowing the opportunity to "break out of former patterns," within the self-contained classroom (Ryor, 1979, p. 5). Chase (1976) contends that ". . . it is well to remember that no system renews itself without unremitting alertness

and a continuing quest for better solutions by the persons involved" (p. 198).

Learning centers within the self-contained classroom can be this quest for success. They can achieve success for the slow learning child within the self-contained classroom.

Self-contained classroom learning centers can indeed be advantageous to the slow learner by providing choices in the selection of activity alternatives. Dunn and Dunn (1972) cite numerous advantages:

1. Motivation is increased because the youngster has participated and declared "ownership" in determining how he will learn and reinforce his learning.
2. Interest and attention spans are increased and boredom reduced because selection is based on what appeals to the child.
3. Enjoyment is more likely to result because the pupil will choose those activities with which he feels most comfortable and which he is able to complete.
4. Successful completion is much more feasible because the pupil is free to select those activities that are possible for him to complete successfully on his level of comprehension and performance.
5. Abilities will be enhanced and the student will be more eager to experiment with other activities as

he is exposed to media and the developing and completed projects of his peers.

6. Self-assessment and decision-making effectiveness will improve. When a child selects a project that is too difficult for him, he soon recognizes that he has made an incorrect decision. He is permitted to change his selection and choose one in which he can function with more ease. The experience will then help him to learn how to assess future projects (or problems) according to a more realistic evaluation of his own abilities. This recycling activity can provide the youngster with excellent growth opportunities to exercise and correct his judgment, make decisions, appraise situations and develop alternative procedures. (pp. 104-105)

Self-contained classroom learning centers, Thomas (1977) contends, should serve as "means, rather than as ends" (p. 198) in assisting the slow learner to success. Learning centers are to be established for the slow learner in the self-contained classroom with a clear purpose. Whether it be to motivate, diagnose, prescribe or enrich the slow learner (Thomas, 1977). Each learning center is to evolve around the slow learner's learning needs, personal interests and personal enrichments (Thomas, 1975).

Learning centers for the slow learner with the purpose of motivation can attempt to "stimulate the child's

interest in a particular subject, concept or procedure" (Kourilsky, 1973, p. 5). It provides stimuli to fulfill their needs in a self-contained classroom for the four reasons that Thomas cites: "(1) It appeals to pupils' innate curiosity; (2) It develops the pupil's awareness of their needs; (3) It encourages the pupil's desire for peer approval; (4) It provides a rewarding environment" (1975, p. 50).

The learning center's attractive appearance can generate spontaneous interest. The self-contained classroom learning center for the slow learner will indeed assist the slow learner to success.

Self-contained classroom learning centers can also serve as diagnostic centers, by providing provisions to analyze pupils' behavior as they reveal the consequences of their activities in the center. The observation of the slow learner in the diagnostic learning center aids in determining the kinds of centers that subsequently should be implemented for the success of the slow learner in a self-contained classroom (Thomas, 1975).

Prescriptive learning centers within the self-contained classroom will be the direct result of the diagnostic center's findings. These learning centers will allow



the slow learners to "develop and acquire the information and understanding necessary for them to maximize their learning" (Thomas, 1975, pp. 52-53). Within this prescriptive learning center, the slow learner will function "on his own level of ability at his own rate" (Thomas, 1975, p. 53). The slow learner's learning style is also to be of prime consideration; for learning styles vary from child to child (Thomas, 1975).

Learning centers that allow for enrichment are also needed in the self contained classroom. Enrichment learning centers primarily "raise the sights, increase the intellect, add to the depth, expand the variety, and improve the learning experiences of pupils" (Thomas, 1975, p. 54) within the self-contained classroom. The slow learner can be allowed to interpret, summarize, and draw conclusions on important events of the times within the enrichment learning center (Thomas, 1975).

Learning centers can assist the slow learner in the self-contained classroom. "Teaching the slow learners is a wide open challenge" (Meyer, 1976, p. 206). Learning centers can meet this challenge within the self-contained classroom by allowing the slow learner to progress at his rate, and within his style. Learning centers can indeed assist the slow learner with success in a self-contained classroom.

## CHAPTER III

### CONCLUSION

The author has reviewed a portion of the literature dealing with who the slow learner is; the needs of the slow learner in a self-contained classroom; and the slow learner's need for individualization to accomplish and achieve with success in a self-contained classroom. Learning centers, as the author has shown by the surveyed literature, will assist in meeting the needs of the slow learner in the self-contained classroom. Benjamin Bloom has indicated that slow learners can learn as much as fast learners, but they require more time and different instructional strategies (Bloom, Hastings & Madaus, 1971). Silberman (1979) further contended that "we are all slow in some ways and we all have talent in other ways" (p. 38).

As educators, we must be aware of each child's need in our self-contained classrooms, including the slow learner. Individual learning styles must be considered in planning achievement for the self-contained classroom. If educators want the slow learner to succeed, Dunn and Dunn (1975) pointed out, we must "be certain that they are placed in an educational environment that capitalizes on the way they learn best" (p. 49). Learning centers within

the self-contained classroom can "capitalize" upon the slow learner's success-oriented learning styles.

In developing the self-contained classroom learning centers, Thomas (1975) contended that educators must always be mindful that "children learn what and when they wish to learn" (p. 40). Hunter (1977) alluded to teachers as "the single most influential factor in individualized instruction--and the one factor available in every school--make the most important difference" (p. 355). Teachers make the difference between success or failure for the slow learner in the self-contained classroom. Learning centers can assist in achievement of success by acknowledging different styles and rates of learning. The slow learners within the self-contained classroom can, and will, achieve at their own rate with learning centers, for "each child is uniquely different" (Smith, 1977, p. 307). Learning centers can provide for these differences.

"A child's development of a positive self-concept, of attitudes and values and standard of behavior is influenced by the atmosphere and the environment in which he lives and learns" (Smith, 1977, pp. 308-309). The self-contained learning center classroom will indeed influence the successful slow learners. The slow learner's attitude and success is vital.

Let all who question the wisdom of education for "all the children" remember that America has not heretofore

provided education for all as a gift from a strong, wealthy, and good people, but rather has become strong, and good because education has been provided for all the people. (Heinrich, 1968, p. 24)

This must be provided for the slow learners.

Learning centers will do this by providing success for the slow learners in the self-contained classroom, simply by meeting each individual difference. Success for the slow learner will enable Paul's story to be as follows:

He might have been a girl, but he happened to be a boy, named Paul. He was born on July 4, rejoiced over by his parents (his father, a factory superintendent; his mother, a former teacher), nurtured tenderly through toddling and preschool years. He looked and acted pretty much like every other child his age (although his parents, rightly, saw him as very different and very special).

He entered the public school kindergarten at age five and went into the ungraded primary just two months after his sixth birthday. His mental age, according to tests, was four and one-half. On the basis of tests, teacher observations, and talks with his parents, it was decided to postpone the teaching of reading for another several months and to continue a wide variety of reading and writing readiness activities. By the middle of his second year in the ungraded primary, he was reading primers well and was almost average in number skills.

His teacher, his parents, and Paul were all pleased.

He entered the ungraded intermediate cycle in the middle of his tenth year and continued to go forward slowly in all subjects. Although he was a part of a heterogeneous homeroom, he was also a member of many small groups--reading and mathematics groups based on achievement and other groups based on interest. By now he had a fat folder of test results, teacher and parent comments, progress sheets for each subject area, and work samples. It was carefully recorded that he was beginning to take real joy in the large classroom library and that his special interest in mathematics continued. He liked sports of all kinds, and although he was not very skilled in any one sport, he enjoyed himself and got along fairly well with the other boys.

In reporting conferences, teachers often told his parents how pleased they were with Paul's progress. His parents and Paul were also pleased.

In junior high, he continued to have a homeroom and a homeroom teacher, who taught him reading, English, and social studies. He had special teachers for science, Spanish, mathematics, music, art, gym and shop (the subject he liked the least).

He graduated into high school at age fifteen and followed the general track, which emphasized basic

academic skills, including instruction in reading and writing all through the four years. He became good friends with his counselor and talked with him at least once a week. He went out for football and became active in the drama club, working on the properties committee. He went into the work-study program his third year, going to school one-half day and working the other half day in the office of a restaurant chain. After graduation, he would like to continue in the restaurant field.

At age seventeen, Paul is looking forward to a successful and satisfying life. (Heinrich, 1968, p. 26)

With the successful assistance of learning centers, Paul will be as Sherrold (1977) cites:

He walks alone  
head up  
eyes straight and clear  
back erect  
chin outthrust  
proud.

"I will go this way," he says,  
"for I have known the other way." (p. 54)

As educators, we must respect the slow learners, and encourage them to become all they can by providing successful learning experiences through learning centers (Reckinger, 1979). They will assist in providing for individual needs within the self-contained classroom (Heinrich, 1968).

"Education all boils down to the ability of people to care for and share with one another" (Beery, 1972, p. vi).

However, we all have much yet to do before schools will become the places they ought to be where each child will find challenge, satisfaction and a feeling of personal significance whatever his abilities may be. (Goodlad, 1959, p. vii)

Learning centers will provide assistance for the slow learner to success within the self-contained classroom. Learning centers will give the slow learner ". . . a feeling of personal significance, whatever his abilities may be" (Goodlad, 1959, p. vii).

Heinrich (1968) cited the following quotation for the education of the slow learner:

To look is one thing.

To see what you look at is another.

To understand what you see is a third.

To learn from what you understand is still something else.

But to be able to act on what you learn is really all that matters. --Amelia D. Proctor (p. 25)

We will enable the slow learner to act with success by allowing the use of learning centers, within the self-contained classroom. Success for the slow learners--learning centers will indeed provide IT in the self-contained classroom.

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